

DPH Announces Third Flu Death of the 2017-2018 Season; First Sussex County Resident Death

DOVER – A third person has died as a result of complications due to the flu since the start of the 2017-2018 flu season in October. The Division of Public Health (DPH) announced that a 76-year-old Sussex County man passed away over the weekend in a New Castle County hospital.

The man who had several underlying health conditions, is the first flu-related death from Sussex County this season. Previously, an 83-year-old female and a 47-year-old male, both from New Castle County, died from flu-related complications. Both also had underlying medical conditions.



As of January 19, there have been 912 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza in Delaware. This number only reflects laboratory-confirmed cases and the actual total in the state is likely much higher as not everyone seeks treatment for their symptoms. In comparison as of Jan. 21, 2017, there were 520 laboratory-confirmed cases and two flu-related deaths last season.

“The flu continues to hit Delaware hard, and we will likely continue to see flu activity continue for weeks to come,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “It is critically important to take preventive measures such as practicing social distancing, washing hands frequently, and covering coughs and sneezes. Everyone is at risk, and vulnerable populations, like the very

young and elderly, are even more so. The flu is unpredictable, and should never be taken lightly.”

Flu symptoms come on suddenly, and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches and body aches, chills, and fatigue. Some people get complications including pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections. Social distancing means that those sick with the flu should stay home from work, school, and other gatherings and not return until they have been free of fever – with a temperature less than 100 degrees F (37.8 degrees C) without the use of fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours. They should avoid close contact with well people in the household, and stay well-hydrated by drinking plenty of water and other clear liquids. Over-the-counter medicines can provide symptom relief but if you suspect you have influenza, call your doctor as he or she may decide to provide antiviral medications to help hasten recovery and prevent serious complications. This is particularly important for those who feel very sick, are pregnant, or have chronic medical conditions.

DPH also asks medical providers to begin antiviral treatment for all hospitalized patients and all high-risk patients with suspected influenza. Antivirals work best when administered within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms and are particularly important for pregnant women and people with chronic health conditions.

DPH also recommends getting your annual flu vaccine if you have not done so already. Flu vaccines continue to be available at many pharmacies and grocery stores, and through primary care physicians and some specialists. To find participating stores, enter your zip code in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) flu vaccine finder at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>. For more information about the flu, visit <http://flu.delaware.gov/> or call DPH at 1-800-282-8672.

Flu shots are still available at DPH clinics located within the State Service Centers:

- Hudson State Service Center, 501 Ogletown Road, Newark. For all ages, including children age 6 months and older. Call 302-283-7587 (choose Option 2) to make an appointment Monday through Friday.
- Williams State Service Center, 805 River Road, Dover. For all ages, including children age 6 months and older. Call 302-857-5140 to make an appointment Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Milford State Service Center – Riverwalk, 253 N.E. Front St., Milford. For ages 9 years and older. Call 302-424-7130 to make an appointment on Mondays only, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Anna C. Shipley State Service Center, 350 Virginia Ave., Seaford. For all ages, including children age 6 months and older. Walk-ins welcome Fridays only, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. For information, call 302-628-6772.

For more information about flu surveillance in Delaware, read the weekly flu report at <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/epi/influenzawkly.html>.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours

of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.